



For Immediate Release:

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IDEM allocates \$143,390 in Grant Money for Mercury Collection

Five Indiana solid waste management districts and one city will receive a total of \$143,390 from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to help collect and dispose of an environmental threat that can be found in many Hoosier homes – mercury.

Many of us remember playing with the shiny substance – which looks like silver and scatters into beads when dropped – as children. The element used to be a staple in science lab cabinets as well as present in many household items such as fever thermometers, thermostats, paint and batteries.

Mercury enters the human body through vapors in the air that we breathe, entering the bloodstream through the lungs. While mercury poisoning is a concern for everyone, mercury poses the greatest risk to children under the age of 6-years-old because of their still-developing bodies.

Since its development of the Mercury Awareness Program (MAP) in 1998, IDEM has played an active role in promoting mercury awareness. In addition to supporting mercury recycling in all 92 counties through the MAP program, IDEM has helped exchange more than 8,000 mercury thermometers throughout Indiana.

The six entities receiving funds will serve as mercury hubs or central collection points for all solid waste management districts and household hazardous waste programs. Since July 1, 2001, solid waste management districts have been required by state law to implement mercury collection programs for the public and small businesses. Mercury hubs provide a valuable service by collecting and storing mercury until sufficient quantities are gathered for recycling or final disposal by a qualified contractor.

Funds to support the hubs come from the Hazardous Substance Response Trust Fund and the Solid Waste Management Fund.

Entities receiving grant funds are:

Allen County SWMD - \$32,264

Howard County SWMD – \$15,868

City of Indianapolis - \$31,776

Monroe County SWMD - \$28,356

Spencer County SWMD – 19,273

Wildcat Creek SWMD - \$15,853